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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

EDITORIAL

The significance of the institutional reforms set in motion by UNCTAD VIII has clearly begun to register with the international community. The promise that these reforms hold for UNCTAD as a forum for constructive intergovernmental dialogue on development was reaffirmed in May by the OECD Council of Ministers and by Ministers of the Non Aligned Movement. The demonstrative value of the reforms as the first major restructuring exercise in the economic and social sector of the United Nations is no less significant. This aspect was highlighted during the July meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), when countries from all regions warmly welcomed the results of UNCTAD VIII. On that occasion the United States said that the UNCTAD reforms would clear the decks for the reorganization being considered for other bodies of the United Nations system, especially in the economic area. The Nordic countries went further, seeing in the reforms a lesson to be learnt by other bodies.

The confirmation of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for issues related to trade and development, and the recognition of its role as a precursor of change within the system are encouraging signs as the organization sets out to tackle the challenges posed by its revised mandate. In to-day's complex, interdependent world, however, these challenges call for a combined response by the entire international community. This point was stressed by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. Kenneth K.S. Dadzie when he addressed ECOSOC: "Central to the new partnership for development to which all countries have committed themselves at UNCTAD VIII is the need for strengthened multilateral cooperation ... The effectiveness of such cooperation, however, depends crucially on the concerted efforts of the United Nations and the family of organizations that has been built up around it."

UNCTAD's readiness to contribute to the promotion of sustained growth in the world economy and to a reactivation of the development process was reaffirmed on that same occasion. It is well placed to do so: first, by virtue of its role as an intergovernmental forum for policy dialogue and as a catalyst for consensus building; second, because of its new methodology, in which the accent is on rigorous analysis of national experiences and processes to increase wealth and well-being as well as of the international economic policies necessary to create an external environment supportive of such processes.

On the other hand, UNCTAD's resources and capacities are limited so that its contribution to a common effort to reactivate development can only be a modest one. As Mr. Dadzie stated in ECOSOC: "In addition to associating non-United Nations organizations, the enterprise sector, the academic community and non-governmental bodies with our work, we will ... draw on other organizations of the United Nations system for direct inputs and take full advantage of the results of their technical work. For us, therefore, consultation, concertation and collaboration with others are not an optional extra, they are an imperative."

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was set up by the General Assembly in 1964 as one of its permanent organs, mandated to promote international trade, particularly that of developing countries, with a view to accelerating their economic development. UNCTAD has evolved into a universal forum with a development perspective, in which member States review the interdependence of economies and of issues in trade, money and finance. UNCTAD is composed of 183 member States, including the 179 members of the United Nations; many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have observer status. The Conference normally meets every four years at ministerial level to establish policy guidelines. Between sessions, work is carried out by the Trade and Development Board and its standing committees, working groups and other subsidiary bodies. The problems of the least developed countries and of Africa's economic recovery receive special attention in UNCTAD's work. The UNCTAD staff–part of the United Nations Secretariat–numbers about 400 and is headed by a Secretary-General, currently Mr. Kenneth K. S. Dadzie (Ghana).

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Michael C. Bonello, Editor

BEYOND THE EARTH SUMMIT-WHAT ROLE FOR UNCTAD?

The presence of so many world leaders at the recent United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)–the Earth Summit–was doubly significant. It was at once a measure of the sharp rise in the level of concern about the prospects for humanity on a planet which is endangered by environmental degradation and of the need to secure for present and future generations the benefits of sound and sustainable development. The participation of numerous international organizations, non-governmental entities, private corporations and scientists, moreover, testified to an awareness that only concerted action can set in motion appropriate policies in pursuit of this objective.

The Summit outcome represents an important first step in this direction. While the texts agreed and the conventions signed at Rio may not have measured up to expectations in terms of specific commitments and targets, they nevertheless constitute a valuable framework for continuing action by the international community to ensure that ecological concerns assume their rightful place in economic decision-making, both nationally and internationally.

The United Nations system represents a unique setting for this purpose. On the political level it provides, by virtue of its universal membership, a democratic forum for developing common approaches and strategies. On the technical level it constitutes a vast repository of expertise in each of the relevant areas. This capacity of the system was duly recognized by the Earth Summit, and several United Nations organizations and agencies, including UNCTAD, have been given a role to play in the follow-up phase. This article provides some indications as to what UNCTAD's role might be, against the background of its past work on sustainable development and of its new mandate.

The Background

Ever since UNCTAD VII in 1987, environmental considerations have been progressively worked into all aspects of the organization's activities. In the context of the economics of sustainability, UNCTAD has analyzed the interface between sustainable development and such key issues as commodities, trade policy, technology, and development finance.

One result of this widening perspective was reflected in the close and fruitful working relationship which developed between the secretariats of UNCTAD and UNCED, and in the insights which UNCTAD was able to contribute to the Earth Summit. These include an assessment of the interlinkages between environmental issues and international trade, prepared for the UNCED Preparatory Committee; a direct input to the draft of Agenda 21 on international cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in the developing countries and related domestic policies; and the recently published study on *Combating Global Warming*, which elaborates on the feasibility of a global system of tradeable carbon emission entitlements *(see "UNCTAD Bulletin", May-June 1992, p. 10)*.

This perspective also found expression in the work of UNCTAD VIII. Taking place three months before the Earth Summit, the Conference offered the international community an opportunity to develop an integrated approach to the issues of environment and sustainable development. The final document of UNCTAD VIII, the Cartagena Commitment (CC), is indeed the first internationally-agreed text that highlights the specific need to systematically re-examine concepts and tools of environmental analysis in order to incorporate the development dimension. At the same time it establishes the principle that all countries have a common but differentiated responsibility for the main environmental problems. It also underlines that international cooperation is essential not only for the adoption of a concerted global strategy on environment, but also to assist developing countries in implementing plans aimed at sustainable development. With this in mind, the Conference singled out sustainable development–which it defined as a process which seeks to achieve economic efficiency.

> *"The search for sustainable development stems from the existence of pervasive linkages between environment and development .....The challenge facing the international community is to translate this concept into reality by devising means to ensure, among other things, that wealth does not continue to generate waste of natural resources and that poverty is steadily eliminated as a source of their degradation. Protecting the environment and encouraging economic growth must, therefore, go hand in hand. The objective should be to create a virtuous circle whereby sustained growth generates the resources to finance the investments necessary for the good management of natural resources, which in turn are essential to sustainable growth".*
> Mr. Kenneth K.S. Dadzie, Secretary-General of UNCTAD at the Earth Summit.

READEX FICHE

ecological sustainability and social equity–as a major orientation for UNCTAD's future work.

This approach firmly located UNCTAD's work at the interface between the national and international policies required to generate positive linkages–and to achieve optimal trade-offs where necessary–between sustainable development, the protection of the environment and the promotion of international trade. It also sets forth, in that context, a number of elements which are vital for good national as well as international management of the earth's resources.

Beyond providing broad orientations for making the promotion of growth and the protection of the environment mutually supportive, the CC also contains a package of proposed actions in the sectoral areas examined by the Conference. Substantive guidelines and work programmes were, in fact, set out both for governments and the UNCTAD secretariat in finance, trade, technology and commodities.

The process of integrating the concept of sustainable development and environmental considerations into UNCTAD's work received an additional impetus during the first session of the Trade and Development Board to be held after the Conference. The Board adopted the terms of reference of the new intergovernmental bodies created by UNCTAD VIII. The mandate of three of these bodies, the Standing Committees on Commodities and on Poverty Alleviation and of the Working Group on the Inter-relationship between Investment and Technology Transfer, specifically incorporate the sustainable development/environment dimension.

The Earth Summit and UNCTAD

By virtue of its newly-expanded substantive responsibilities and institutional reforms, therefore, UNCTAD appears well equipped to play its part in the follow up to the Earth Summit. This perception is reinforced by the symbiotic relationship which exists between the UNCTAD VIII and UNCED outcomes. As an illustration, it is worth noting that the theme of the CC, "a new partnership for development" is echoed in the preamble to the Rio Declaration which calls for a "new and equitable partnership." Resemblances between the two texts also exist with regard to the treatment of such issues as poverty, the least developed countries, technology, the international economic system and trade, and the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments.

As for Agenda 21, the other major outcome of the Earth Summit, this draws extensively on the language used by the CC in the areas of trade and commodities and develops an approach similar to that in the CC with regard to poverty alleviation, environmentally-sound technologies and financial mechanisms for environmental protection. Furthermore, when discussing the international institutional arrangements for the follow-up of UNCED, the text of Agenda 21 singles out UNCTAD, together with UNEP and UNDP, as having a role to play: "*The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should play an important role in the implementation of Agenda 21 as extended at the eighth session of the Conference, taking into account the importance of the interrelationship between development, international trade and the environment and in accordance with its mandate in the area of sustainable development.*"

UNCTAD'S Role Outlined

At its forthcoming September session the Trade and Development Board will discuss the impact of the Earth Summit texts on UNCTAD's work and will take the necessary action to ensure that the intergovernmental machinery adopts the required measures. Meanwhile, the UNCTAD VIII and Earth Summit texts provide ample indications as to what UNCTAD's role might be. The related activities could be grouped under four broad headings, *viz.* international issues; national policies; regulatory mechanisms; and international environmental negotiations.

International Issues

Under this heading UNCTAD would seek to incorporate the environmental dimension into the interrelated areas of trade, commodities, technology and development finance with a view to strengthening international cooperation to support sustainable development.

In the trade field possible tasks could include: analysis of the linkages between trade liberalization and protection of the environment; analysis and dissemination of information on trade-related environmental measures, in particular through an extension of UNCTAD's Trade Control Measures Information System (TCMIS); analysis of the impact of international environmental measures on competition and trade; and research on how to ensure compatibility between international trade rules and principles and trade-related environmental measures with a view to avoiding the use of such measures for protectionist purposes.

Commodities are expected to be another major field of UNCTAD activity in line with the Conference decisions. The tasks to be undertaken in connection with the work of the new Standing Committee on Commodities have yet to

be defined, but it may be expected that research will cover such topics as: how environmental and resource costs could be reflected in commodity prices and the implications for competitiveness; the possible inclusion of environmental considerations in commodity agreements; and the provision of appropriate technology to help developing countries promote ecologically-sound processes of commodity production and diversification.

In the context of UNCTAD's work in the area of development finance, ways could be examined of generating additional finance for environmental protection, especially through innovative financing mechanisms. Particular attention would be devoted to debt relief, including debt-conversion schemes, and to the feasibility of using tradeable carbon emission entitlements.

In view of the central role which technology can play in environmental protection, attention might well be given, in the context of the Working Group on Investment and Technology Transfer, to studying ways of facilitating the access of developing countries to environmentally-sound technologies on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms. Efforts could also be made to tap the vast reservoir of proprietary technology available through commercial and investment channels.

National Policies

Consistently with the increased prominence which the CC gives to the examination of domestic policies, UNCTAD could seek to contribute to the elaboration of national policy frameworks for sustainable development, based on a cross-sectoral approach, with a view to ensuring positive linkages between sectoral and macroeconomic policies. Specific tasks would include: the identification of policies required to alleviate poverty in the context of addressing environmental concerns and achieving sustainable development; the promotion of the sound management of natural resources in the commodities sector so as to reconcile production and export needs with the sustainability of the natural resource base; the promotion of environmentally-sound technologies, based on both external and endogenous knowledge, as a basic condition for achieving sustainable patterns of production and consumption; and studying how to alleviate external financial constraints to permit a sound management of natural resources.

Regulatory Mechanisms

To effectively integrate environment and development in the policies and practices of countries, it is necessary to formulate and implement integrated laws and regulations which are based on sound social, ecological, economic and scientific principles. It is equally necessary to develop workable mechanisms to review compliance. In this context UNCTAD could examine the most appropriate regulatory mechanisms required for promoting environmentally-sound development in developing countries without hampering growth at the national level, and trade expansion and competitiveness at the international level. Another task might be to examine the feasibility of harmonizing these regulatory mechanisms at the international level.

International Environmental Negotiations

It is to be expected that the progressive development and codification of international law concerning sustainable development will require further long and complex negotiations. UNCTAD has already accumulated considerable experience in extending assistance to developing countries in connection with their participation in multilateral negotiations. Building upon this experience, it could contribute to the achievement of such objectives of Agenda 21 as: identifying difficulties which prevent some developing countries from participating in, or implementing, international agreements; examining ways of taking into account varying circumstances of individual countries through differential obligations or gradual application of obligations; designing specific provisions for developing countries–in particular in terms of financial and technical assistance–in order to allow them to implement international agreements; and assisting developing countries in their preparation for, and in the implementation of, such agreements which include provisions related to trade, commodities, finance and technology.

Institutional Cooperation

The stage is now set for UNCTAD to further integrate the concept of sustainable development and its environmental dimension into its work programme and to contribute to consensus building on appropriate national and international policies. UNCTAD plans, furthermore, to cooperate closely with the institutions, particularly the high-level Commission on Sustainable Development, established to follow-up the results of the Earth Summit and to review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. In the light of the experience gained during the UNCED preparatory process, a good working relationship between the Trade and Development Board and the Commission as well as between the respective secretariats should not fail to materialize.

EXPORT PROCESSING FREE ZONES AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Export processing free zones (EPZs) first appeared in the mid-1950s at Shannon in Ireland. It is in the developing countries, however, in particular in the newly-industrialized countries of Asia, that the concept has really taken root. There the number of EPZs has grown considerably and in some cases they have proved an important means of strengthening the industrial base and of opening up the economy to the outside world.

Various studies have shown that there is no correlation between the presence of EPZs and the economic, demographic or political situation in the countries in which they are established. Such zones are to be found both in developing countries with large populations and a relatively high per capita income, such as Mexico and Brazil, and in countries having a large population and a relatively low income such as India, as well as in countries like Barbados and Jordan with a small population and a relatively high per capita income, or even in countries with a small population and a low income level such as Haiti.

The first EPZ in a developing country was established at Kandla in India in the mid-1960s. By 1989 there were 200 such zones in the developing world; in addition, more than 100 are under construction and 50 more are planned. This movement is centred mainly in Asia and Latin America, although in recent years Africa has joined the trend.

Evolution of the EPZ Concept

Free zones go under various names. A free trade zone is an area, usually situated near a port or an airport, where goods may be freely stored prior to re-export. This category also covers free ports, transit zones, duty-free zones and duty-free shops. An EPZ, on the other hand, focuses more on processing and on production for export: it is the main location for manufacturing industries that freely import foreign capital goods, components and raw materials and re-export finished products without paying customs duty.

Over the past 20 years there has been a considerable evolution in the EPZ concept. First, the benefits and advantages of EPZs have been extended to areas scattered throughout a country's territory on which national or foreign firms are located. The aim has been to promote specific types of economic activity regardless of location, to achieve integration with the national economy and to allow foreign firms to choose the best location for their activities. Some EPZs cover a very large area, as in the case of the special economic zones in China. In other cases, a whole country has free zone status.

There has also been a change in the role of imports. The original intention was for the industries in an EPZ to export their entire production. To-day, firms in most EPZs are allowed to sell part of their output on the domestic market. The development of an import function is mainly attributable to the practical difficulty of controlling smuggling from the EPZ into the host country and to pressure from national consumers and foreign investors who are attracted by the potential profits from sales on the local market.

Another development has been the growing share taken by national capital in firms located in duty-free zones. This is largely explained by the need to diminish the instability of manufacturing activities and establish them more firmly in such zones and to increase the local value added of their exports. In some EPZs, as in India, such local participation may take the form of joint ventures. Currently, some two thirds of enterprises in developing country EPZs are either local firms or joint ventures with foreign partners.

The establishment of industrial export regimes applicable, in particular, to subcontracting industries, as in the case of the "maquiladoras" or in-bond assembly plants in Mexico, is a further variation on the EPZ theme. Yet another is the emergence of EPZs as service zones. This is attributable to the importance of the services sector in the economic activities of EPZs as a whole, and in particular of certain services such as banking, insurance and data processing. Thailand, for example, has established an export free zone for data processing.

The Objectives

The establishment of an EPZ is designed to achieve four main objectives. The first is to earn foreign currency through the attraction of foreign direct investment and the generation of exports. In 1989 exports accounted for some $ 13–15 billion in the 200 EPZs in developing countries, with Asian EPZs accounting for 65 per cent of the total, Latin American and Caribbean EPZs for 32 per cent and African EPZs for 3 per cent.

It is estimated that between 20 and 40 per cent of the gross value of exports goes to the host country. Exceptions exist however. In Mexico, for example, net foreign currency earnings are low because 90 per cent of the raw materials are imported. The situation is very different in Asia where there are strong links between the local market and EPZs and the latter purchase a relatively high proportion of inputs locally.

The value of exports from zones as a proportion of overall exports is not, however, an accurate indicator of the economic contribution of EPZs to national wealth, as certain factors of production are imported from abroad. A better measure is the value added locally, *i.e.* wages paid to workers, purchases of local raw materials, taxes paid by firms, and rent for buildings and land. Experience shows that this figure is rarely higher than 25 per cent.

Job creation is also an objective of EPZs. In 1989, 1.5 million workers were employed in developing country EPZs, and it is estimated that the number will have risen to between 2.5 and 3 million by the mid-1990s. The geographical distribution of employment in EPZs mirrors closely the export shares quoted above.

EPZs may also promote technology transfer. The establishment of a modern factory in an EPZ can be a way for a developing country to acquire know-how. In practice, however, technology transfer has been rather limited, the main reason being the high degree of vertical integration of the production process of export-oriented industries. They often involve routine, highly-automated tasks, as in the case of the electrical components industry, which can be performed by relatively unskilled labour. In addition, the specialized nature of the tasks is such that the skills acquired, however minimal, often cannot be applied to other production processes.

Sometimes, EPZs are designed to make better use of domestic natural resources. The Inga EPZ in Zaire, for example, was created to make use of surplus hydro-electric power, thereby contributing to the viability of the hydro-electric complex and allowing energy-intensive production processes to be set up.

EPZs in Sub-Saharan Africa

The first EPZ in Sub-Saharan Africa was created in Mauritius in 1970. Within the following ten years others were set up in Senegal, Liberia and Ghana. They were followed by the ones in Zaire (1981), Togo (1989) and Madagascar (1989). The most recent EPZs are those established in Cameroon and Kenya in 1990. Six others are currently under study, in Benin, Comoros, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

The Mauritius experience has been particularly interesting. The EPZ has attracted almost 600 enterprises, and exports from the zone represent 62 per cent of the country's total export trade. The number of jobs created, 87,000, has helped considerably to reduce unemployment.

However, not all EPZs in Africa have been so successful. Administrative hurdles, insufficient promotion, inadequate infrastructure and high minimum investment levels, among other factors, have discouraged investors. Although the EPZs in Zaire and Ghana have been established for a number of years, for example, they have not yet become fully operational. The EPZ in Senegal is currently being reorganized, while those in Madagascar, Togo, Kenya and Cameroon are still in their infancy.

This rather disappointing experience has led a number of African governments to introduce changes in the legal status of the EPZs, accompanied by a relaxation of the regulations governing their activities. This approach is in line with the more liberal foreign investment policies currently being followed by many African countries.

A common characteristic of these new policies is the "delocalization" of EPZs, which is based on the premise that the potential benefits of a zone can only be maximized if it becomes integrated with the economy of the host country. In some cases, as in Togo, Madagascar and Cameroon, this approach has led to the granting of "duty-free" status to export-oriented enterprises irrespective of their geographical location. In Mauritius this idea has been extended so that the whole country has been designated a free zone. In Senegal, Togo and Cameroon the notion of "delocalization" has also taken the form of permission to EPZ-based enterprises to sell output on the local market, subject to the payment of customs duties.

Another feature of this new approach is an attempt to change the composition of the output of EPZs, with a growing emphasis on high value-added products involving more sophisticated technological processes. A typical case is that of Mauritius which is sub-contracting some of its first-generation EPZ activities to neighbouring countries with lower labour costs, while itself trying to attract more technologically-advanced enterprises.

The promotion of local participation by increasing trade and commercial links with the domestic economy and by encouraging greater participation of nationals in the capital of EPZ enterprises are other means of integrating EPZs with the economies of African countries. Some countries, moreover, are seeking to take advantage of their membership of trade agreements such as the Lomé Convention, which provides preferential access to foreign markets, to establish new outlets for the products of their EPZs.

This article is based on a recent study entitled "Export Processing Free Zones of Sub-Saharan Africa" (UNCTAD/ECDC/225) which was prepared in the context of a UNDP-financed project on economic and technical cooperation between African and Latin American countries.

UNCTAD LAUNCHES "TRAINS"

Delegations from member States taking part in UNCTAD's Special Committee on Preferences last May attended a demonstration of a new computerized information system called TRAINS, for Trade Analysis and Information System. After the presentation, a set of diskettes containing TRAINS was distributed to the representatives of 80 governments of both developing and developed countries, for onward transmission to the focal point in each country which is responsible for duplicating the system and distributing it to the relevant governmental bodies. On this same occasion the system was also given to representatives of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), the EC, FAO, GATT and the League of Arab States (LAS). Also in the framework of the Special Committee on Preferences, a training session on the use of TRAINS was arranged for delegates from capitals. Since then, separate training sessions in English and in Spanish have been organized for representatives of member States based in Geneva.

TRAINS has been developed by the UNCTAD secretariat in cooperation with the International Customs Tariffs Bureau (ICTB) and the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT (ITC) and with the financial support of UNDP. Its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) component was co-financed by UNDP and the Governments of Austria and Switzerland.

TRAINS is a practical tool, designed to run on IBM-compatible personal computers and intended mainly for use by trade promotion offices, policy-makers and economic operators engaged in exporting. It is also of great utility to trade negotiators and to researchers working in the area of international trade. TRAINS enables the user to retrieve, for selected products and markets, information on trade control measures combined with trade flow data as well as addresses of potential importers. It also provides easy access to full details of country schemes under the GSP. Moreover, TRAINS is expected to make a useful contribution to UNCTAD's work on trade expansion. The idea of establishing consolidated computerized information on the various GSP schemes arose three years ago and has come to fruition with the launching of TRAINS.

Five Databases in One

TRAINS renders compatible the presentation and analysis of five different databases. It effectively integrates UNCTAD's Database on Trade Control Measures (TCMs), the GSP System, trade data according to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS), the System of the International Customs Tariffs Bureau (ICTB) and the IMPORTERS Database of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT(ITC). Moreover, plans are in hand to integrate GRADE (for GReen trADE) into TRAINS. GRADE is a computerized information system for the analysis of trade-related environmental measures.

The components of TRAINS may be described briefly as follows:

- The Trade Control Measures System, which draws data from the UNCTAD Database on TCMs and enables cross-country presentation and analysis of information on TCMs, including tariffs, para-tariff and non-tariff measures. The GSP System elaborates on the GSP as one particular preferential tariff measure and enables beneficiary countries to access details of GSP schemes, including quantitative restrictions and rules of origin.
- Trade data on import and export values by origin and destination at the 6-digit level of the HS. The HS provides a detailed product breakdown, distinguishing 5,019 basic products.
- The System of the ICTB, which provides product descriptions of the national tariff lines of selected countries beyond the 6-digit level of the HS.
- The IMPORTERS Database of the ITC which contains, for selected product categories and markets, names and addresses of importers as well as information about other products imported by these companies.
- General documentation on import regimes, the GSP and other preferential schemes as well as bibliographical references to published market research studies.

TRAINS in Action

The wealth of integrated information available through TRAINS is best appreciated by examining the case of a specific product. Suppose that an exporter in a developing country is interested in exploring potential markets for frozen lobsters. Once he enters the product description on his computer, the system will search for the corresponding HS code for frozen lobsters. Once this is identified, comparable data on trade and trade control measures relating to this product can then be displayed on the screen for the countries available in TRAINS. The data provided include the value of each country's imports of frozen lobsters; information on rates for tariffs, including details of preferential treatment under the GSP and of similar treatment accorded to the least developed countries, and on para-tariff measures, including value added

tax; and information on non-tariff measures (NTMs) such as quantitative restrictions, advance payment requirements, foreign exchange restrictions, minimum pricing and anti-dumping countervailing measures.

The exporter can also request the system to focus on a single market in order to obtain more basic information such as its estimated imports of frozen lobsters. Separate options in TRAINS give access to information on the main suppliers of the selected product, on importing companies and on bilateral trade flows among countries selected as markets and suppliers.

Dissemination

TRAINS is currently being disseminated in compliance with a decision of the Trade and Development Board which requires the UNCTAD secretariat to provide to member States, on request, information on trade control measures contained in its computerized database. Accordingly, the secretariat invited member States to designate focal points and, as of April this year, 53 countries had done so. In response to a similar invitation, the ALADI (Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración) and JUNAC (Junta del Acuerdo de Cartagena) secretariats have formally agreed to collaborate with UNCTAD. It should also be noted that a memorandum of understanding between UNCTAD and ITC provides for cooperation between the two organizations in the dissemination of trade information such as TRAINS.

Subject to resource availabilities, all the focal points will be supplied with TRAINS, containing information on TCMs. The system will then be further disseminated within the countries and/or regions. At the same time the focal points will serve as a channel through which the UNCTAD secretariat may obtain relevant information in order to keep the system current. It is planned that the focal points will be provided with recent information through updated versions of TRAINS at least once a year.

More information on the TRAINS software and the Database on Trade Control Measures, including the GSP schemes and the trade data, can be obtained from UNCTAD/DDM/TCMIS (Fax (41-22) 734.30.86).

CALENDAR OF UNCTAD TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Subject	*Date*	*Location*	*Type of activity*
Generalized System of Preferences (SGP)	September	Philippines	National seminar
	28 Sept.-2 Oct.	Santiago (Chile)	Regional seminar
	5-8 October	" "	National seminar
	November	Kenya	" "
	November	Benin	" "
Trade Expansion with Eastern Europe	26-28 October	Cairo (Egypt)	Business week
	1-4 November	Dubai	" "
TRAINFORTRADE	September	Mauritius	Regional seminar: trade with EC
	"	Vietnam	National seminar: RBPs
	"	China	" " "
	"	Malaysia	Reg. workshop: commodity trading
	October	Philippines	Seminar: trade with EC
	"	Costa Rica	Reg. seminar: commodity trading
	Oct./Nov.	Cameroon	" " " "
Debt Management	21 Sept. - 2 Oct.	Geneva (Switzerland)	DMFAS Seminar
Insurance	October	Tunis (Tunisia)	Workshop on Reinsurance
Multimodal Transport	September	Manila (Philippines)	National workshop
	"	Volos (Greece)	Sub-regional workshop
	October	Colombo (Sri Lanka)	National workshop
	"	Jakarta (Indonesia)	" "
	"	China	" "
	26-31 October	Kingston (Jamaica)	Sub-regional workshop
Port Management and Development	12-30 October	Antwerp (Belgium)	Seminar: Management of Container Terminals

This calendar appears periodically in the "UNCTAD Bulletin". Persons interested in obtaining information on any of the above-mentioned training activities are invited to contact the Chief, Joint Technical Co-operation Unit, UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

CITING A STILL HESITANT WORLD ECONOMIC RECOVERY, UNCTAD'S SECRETARY-GENERAL CAUTIONS AGAINST COMPLACENCY

On 7 July the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. Kenneth K.S. Dadzie, addressed a meeting of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York on developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation. The meeting was also addressed by the Executive Heads of other multilateral institutions. Following are excerpts from Mr. Dadzie's statement:

* * * *

The world economy has been in the midst of its most severe recession since the Second World War. Output per capita has declined, and global unemployment has risen to an unprecedented level. The absolute level of output has fallen in the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom, while continental Western Europe is stagnating, after losing the boost from the unification of Germany. Growth is still slow in all developing regions other than Asia, with especially poor performance in Africa and the Middle East. In Eastern Europe the transition process has proved to be much more painful than had been thought likely at the outset. There is as yet little ground for optimism about the long-expected recovery.

The severity of the global recession reflects the presence of new factors. In many countries, major financial stresses have arisen owing to a rapid expansion of borrowing by the private sector and concomitant expansion of credit, which led to an inflation of asset prices, which in turn spurred further borrowing. But this process is now being followed by asset price deflation, reduced demand for, as well as supply of credit, cuts in private household and business expenditures, loss of confidence, and a weakening of financial institutions.

The strength of these deflationary forces may well continue to be underestimated. Unless there is a timely response, cumulative forces may be unleashed, damaging the prospects of all countries in both the short and the long term. Relaxed monetary policies, though very necessary, are unlikely to prove a sufficient counterweight to the impact of the domestic debt overhang on spending. Carefully designed stimulative fiscal policies also need to play a role, especially in those countries where private sector spending has weakened most.

Deficit spending by the public sector is not without its own dangers, of course, especially for the long term. But nor is neglect of education, health and infrastructure. Besides, the risks of adopting stimulative policies now must be weighed against the alternative danger, namely that a build-up of unemployment might be followed by over-stimulative policies later, or by protectionism. As for the argument that increased public-sector deficits will absorb scarce savings, suffice it to say that it is questionable at a time when the deterrent to higher investment is deficient expenditure, not deficient thrift, and when inflation has ceased to be a serious danger: indeed, commodity prices are excessively low.

In short, it should not be taken for granted that private sector behaviour left by itself would produce stability and growth. Governments need to resume their responsibilities and act to ensure financial stability and a higher level of activity. Given the interdependence of the world economy, this implies close coordination of macroeconomic policies. It also provides a very strong case for resuming SDR allocations on a significant scale, and for introducing arrangements to ensure that they stimulate growth.

World economic recovery is especially important for developing countries. These have been undertaking painful adjustment measures over the last decade. A growing number of them have been in the vanguard of trade liberalization. They have been willing to liberalize their trade unilaterally without receiving negotiating concessions. But how far will it be possible for all the countries that are now liberalizing to achieve rapid export growth? There is already evidence to suggest that, if many countries try to expand their exports, they will face either an escalation of protectionism or a fall in their export prices.

To underwrite the pursuit of outward-oriented development strategies, the developed countries need to be more flexible in opening their markets to developing countries. Liberalization is necessary not only in key sectors such as agriculture and textiles, but also with respect to more subtle restrictions, such as the conditions often attached to the use of various preferential arrangements.

Concluding the Uruguay Round in a positive and balanced outcome is of course crucial, and every reserve of political will, especially in the major industrial countries, must be deployed to this end. But the euphoria of that event, when it occurs, should not be cause for complacency. Much will remain to be done to ensure that all developing countries, and not just a select few, are able to reap the benefits that they have been assured will be forthcoming from an opening of their economies.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE IN SERVICES

A key element in the profound transformation which the world economy has been experiencing in recent years is the services sector. With the continuing globalization of economic activity, complex new international divisions of labour are emerging. An important feature of this trend has been the appearance of firms specializing in service activities. In some cases they serve national enterprises while in others they provide global support to transnational corporations.

Not only is the organization of the global economy changing, but a technical revolution based on new information technology (IT) is also taking place, impacting particularly on the services sector. Fundamental changes in the operations of service activities have important implications for the economies of developing countries and for the transfer of technology. Since service industries have become technology-intensive, their importance as users of new technology as well as their contribution to its development have expanded considerably.

Whether these changes will improve the prospects for developing country participation in international trade in services is still an open question. There are possibilities for them to enter world markets, and the rapidly changing technology indeed creates opportunities for new entrants to challenge established market leaders. In the fields of computer software and telecommunications services, for example, several developing countries have entered the world market by successfully accessing advanced technologies. The dissemination of knowledge about these experiences may lead to opportunities for technical assistance and for furthering economic cooperation among developing countries.

Computer Software

The software trade has proved particularly attractive for developing countries with a surplus of skilled, low-wage labour and access to computer hardware. These countries have already reaped substantial benefits from their early entry into the software sector, for they have thereby acquired the technological capability to adapt software applications more closely to local requirements. On the other hand, they have paid a high cost to establish the complex institutional framework required and are often subject to retaliation because they are perceived as protectionist or as violating intellectual property rights.

Even though the world market is largely dominated by United States computer software houses, several developing countries including the three described here–Brazil, India and Singapore–have gained a foothold in software trade. Each of these countries has established a market presence and there appears to be scope for technical cooperation, with exchanges of information and staff and cooperation in marketing with other developing countries.

In the case of Brazil, the Government supported the development of operating systems as a priority area. Significant exports have been achieved to countries including China, Cuba and the former Soviet Union. All forms of non-institutionalized technology transfer in software have occurred in Brazil, but the most common are tropicalization and modification. In the former, the software is disguised by conversion into different programming languages or relocation of the commands. Modification involves adapting the computer programmes so that in certain respects they operate in new ways more closely tailored to user requirements. Imported software still dominates the Brazilian industry, however, with local activity focused on applications of software packages.

The software industry in India has concentrated on the export of professional services, such as writing specialized (bespoke) programmes and maintenance. Private software firms in Bombay and Bangalore regularly supply transnational companies in Europe and the United States. Some 25 Indian software houses were registered during the 1980s as software exporters with overseas branches, and several American companies are now commissioning work to be carried out in Indian data-processing centres where engineers work for clients in the United States via satellite links. Historically, one of the main factors facilitating Indian software development has been an abundance of English-speaking, technically-trained staff. Moreover, the Government has recently encouraged the expansion of courses to train additional software professionals.

Singapore has established a software industry primarily geared to servicing public agencies. Computer services are now exported to public administrations in other countries engaged in computerization and network development. Public agencies in Singapore itself have been major customers for the domestic software industry and have demonstrated how information technology could be applied to service functions. The Government at the outset supported a programme to produce local software and information services through the creation of major training and education facilities. This included

overseas placements of graduates for advanced training and recruitment of senior professionals from abroad. In addition, salary scales in public agencies were adjusted to stimulate recruitment into software activities, and new software systems were introduced gradually so as to minimize risk and facilitate staff and organizational learning.

Telecommunications Services

Trade in telecommunications services, including telephone networks, specialized networks for data communications, messaging services and information access services have provided opportunities for a number of developing countries. Traditionally, the establishment and maintenance of an adequate telecommunications infrastructure have been central features of national development strategies, with close links established between telecommunications services and equipment suppliers. Several newly-industrializing countries have been opening their telecommunications sector to international competition to gain access to advanced technologies. Furthermore, countries with extensive software skills have been able to skip generations of equipment and to leap-frog into digital electronic equipment.

Three developing countries in particular have successfully penetrated the telecommunications trade, *viz.* Brazil, Thailand and Singapore. In each case the government has stimulated the development of the sector by establishing research and development centres and promoting the training of electronics, telecommunications and software engineers.

In Brazil, the Government established a Telecommunications Research Centre in 1972 which encouraged transnational companies to set up local manufacturing plants and to develop a wide range of public and private equipment. In the mid-1970s a strategy of network digitalization was decided upon, allowing Brazil's telecommunications service to leap-frog into the most technologically advanced telematics activities. In the 1980s the Research Centre set up a number of programmes in digital telecommunications R and D, including the development of microprocessors, fibre optic systems and satellite communications.

In Thailand two types of institution have developed telecommunications services. The Telephone Organization of Thailand has relied on outside sources of technology, with foreign expertise and equipment supplied mostly by Japanese companies. The smaller Communications Authority has developed in-house technology and design capabilities with the establishment of an R and D centre and the encouragement of overseas study for Thai graduate students. It is expected that competition between the two organizations will speed up the diffusion of advanced services.

Singapore has achieved the most notable success in this field, for it has created the world's first completed Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) system. The system combines interactive services of videotex, computer networking and computer database services. This development is part of the Government's 1986 Plan for Information Technology which also proposed the establishment of an Electronic Data Interchange system to connect offices involved in foreign trade. The Plan was an explicit recognition of the contribution that telecommunications can make to economic development, the need to invest in communications R and D and the need to stimulate linkages between various IT activities.

Conclusion

Since some IT-based products are mature while others are much less well-established, it may be difficult for developing countries to break into the production of mature products where economies of scale are important and marketing and distribution channels have to be consolidated. New types of skill and new skill combinations are moreover often required for effective technology transfer. This involves melding technical appreciation of IT systems with an understanding of the specific applications to which they are being put. Finally, service firms may find themselves intimately involved in the design of both hardware and software which are important for their own operations, and may also be vital to the whole economy. Thus, for example, in Brazil banks have been responsible for designing automated teller machines.

Developing countries with ambitions to enter the IT services trade may find it particularly useful to study the successful experiences of those that have already seized opportunities to leap-frog into the field. It has typically required close coordination between government, education, research and business participants. Examination of the roles of transnational corporations already active in the field, the scope for economies of scale in service production, the extent to which niche markets are typical in new services and infrastructure requirements are additional factors worthy of exploration.

This article is based on a recent study, "Technological Change in Services and International Trade Competitiveness" (UNCTAD/ITP/TEC/29).

REVIEWS

FINANCE FOR GROWTH: LESSONS FROM JAPAN
Cem Somel
UNCTAD Discussion Paper–No. 44, July 1992

This *Discussion Paper* examines the role played by Japanese financial policies in the post-war period, in particular their contribution to Japan's rapid industrialization and growth. It also examines the workings of the financial system and the internal strains and outside pressures that provoked its slow evolution throughout the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The first part of the *Paper* is a systemic exposition of the structural and institutional mechanisms of the Japanese financial system and a description of the period 1955-1973 during which its most prominent investment-oriented features were formed and exploited. The second part of the *Paper* observes the transition which the system underwent in the period 1974-84 in adjusting to the export-led growth of the economy. The deregulation process is also described. The third part looks at the period after 1984 which was marked by the integration of the system with international financial markets and by the need to adapt to the consequences of liberalization and globalization. The *Paper* concludes that the post-war history of Japanese finance reveals the elements of financial policies necessary for rapid industrialization. These are: minimizing costs through information flows, control and discipline; and ensuring long-termism by providing a predictable and stable economic and financial environment. The author suggests that such policies create an indispensable framework for selective industrial policies that can determine a country's place in the international division of labour.

HANDBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS, 1991
United Nations publication
Sales No. E/F.92.II/D.6, US$ 78

Like its predecessors, the UNCTAD *Handbook of International Trade and Development Statistics, 1991* provides a wide range of statistical data relevant to the analysis of world trade and development. Data are presented, whenever possible, in the form of rank-orderings, growth rates, shares, and other special calculations, while time series of basic trade data cover as long a period as possible, in some cases up to 1950. The *Handbook* contains seven main parts and one annex covering: the overall value of trade; the volume unit value and terms of trade, commodity prices and consumer prices; the network of world trade by origin and destination; the commodity structure of imports and exports for individual countries; financial flows; aid and balance of payments data; basic indicators of development, including population, GDP, and agricultural, industrial and social indicators. A new feature in the tables on developing countries' imports and exports is the inclusion of comparable data for the "world" and "developed market economy countries" groupings.

TRANSFER AND UTILIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY
A country study on Fiji
UNCTAD/ITP/TEC/30

Prepared within the framework of a UNDP-funded project on the Transfer and Utilization of Technology in Least Developed and Island Developing Countries, this study assesses policies governing the transfer and utilization of technology in Fiji. After reviewing recent trends and developments in the Fijian economy, the study takes a closer look at the island's human resources potential and technological capabilities in the light of the demands generated by the rapid expansion of the manufacturing sector. It then examines the policies and arrangements for the acquisition and utilization of technology as well as the state of coordination on technology transfer, research and development and technical issues. This is followed by an analysis of technology transfer in garment manufacturing and in the pine timber industry, two important sectors of the Fijian economy. The study makes some recommendations, among them the need for a long-term approach to technology policy.

GUIDE TO PUBLICATIONS, 1991
UNCTAD/GP(91)1

The UNCTAD *Guide to Publications, 1991* lists the reference numbers and titles of the main reports and studies issued during 1991. It is divided into four sections: English, French, Spanish and Arabic. Many UNCTAD documents are, however, also available in Chinese and Russian. The English section contains a short description of each document. The names of studies and reports are contained in separate chapters corresponding to UNCTAD's main areas of activity. UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Centre (ITC) documents are listed separately. Copies of the *Guide* are available from the UNCTAD Reference Unit.

NOTES

TRAINFORTRADE NETWORK IN CENTRAL AMERICA

With the support of the European Community, UNCTAD has set up the first segment of the TRAINFORTRADE network of training institutions with the creation of two sub-regional centres in Central America. The network is starting to operate in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. One of the two centres is located in San José, Costa Rica, while the other is in San Salvador. Each of the other countries involved in the project has designated a national coordinator. A workshop for the training managers of the institutions participating in the project was held at the Chamber of Commerce of El Salvador from 4-8 May. It was also attended by the regional and national coordinators from the countries in the project.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Senior officials from six developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region participated in a Workshop and Study Tour organized by the UNCTAD secretariat from 4-16 May as part of the activities of its Advisory Service on Transfer of Technology. The participants, from Bhutan, Fiji, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar and Nepal, visited Malaysia, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea. The purpose of the Study Tour was to enable participants to benefit from the experiences of other developing countries of the region in matters concerning the transfer and development of technology. The Workshop, which took place in Kuala Lumpur, was devoted to issues related to the international competitiveness of the least developed and island developing countries in trade and industry.

MEETING ON ENTERPRISE COOPERATION

Some 85 enterprises from 16 developing countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe were represented at a meeting on Enterprise Cooperation among Developing Countries which was held from 11-14 May in Havana, Cuba. The meeting was organized by UNCTAD and by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Chamber of Commerce of Cuba, with the support of UNDP. The participants discussed ways of promoting inter-enterprise cooperation and trade expansion. These include the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to South-South trade; a fuller use of the GSTP; the multilateralization of bilateral and plurilateral free trade agreements to avoid discrimination; improved cooperation among shipping companies of developing countries; a more intensive use of Free Trade Zones; and the linking of information systems and databases to improve the access of traders to relevant commercial and investment information and to business opportunities. Participants were also able to engage in bilateral contacts.

GSP ANNUAL REVIEW

From 18-26 May the ninety-three countries attending the UNCTAD Special Committee on Preferences reviewed the implementation of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). The Committee discussed–for the first time–the question of graduation or differentiation; problems relating to the complexity and diversity of rules of origin governing GSP schemes; and the role of technical cooperation in helping exporters make better use of these schemes. During the session some 83 bilateral and plurilateral consultations on individual GSP schemes were held between 20 preference-receiving and 15 preference-giving countries. This was the first intergovernmental meeting after UNCTAD VIII and was described by its Chairman, Mr. Ernst August Horing of Germany, as "encouraging and hopefully [it] will set the example for the conduct of meetings of other working groups in UNCTAD."

UNCTAD CONSULTATION WITH TRADE UNIONS

Continuing its informal policy dialogues with development actors, UNCTAD held its sixth annual consultation with trade unions on 6 June. The consultation was attended by representatives of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU); the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU); the World Confederation of Labour (WCL); the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU); and the International Labour Office (ILO). Opening the meeting, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. Yves Berthelot, spoke about the outcome of UNCTAD VIII, highlighting in particular the Conference decision that UNCTAD should develop close cooperation with external actors. Apart from an exchange of views on how such cooperation might develop, the meeting discussed the two substantive items on its agenda, *viz.* International trade; the Uruguay Round and its implications for the development of developing countries; and International trade and workers' rights. Briefings were given by members of the UNCTAD secretariat.

THIRD TRAINFORTRADE SEMINAR ON COMMODITY TRADING

With the support of the Government of France, UNCTAD organized the third TRAINFORTRADE Seminar on marketing strategies for commodities and the use of futures markets and options from 9-18 June in St. Denis, Ile de la Réunion. Some 20 participants from Burundi, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion, Rwanda and Zaire studied marketing strategies for coffee, cotton, cocoa, sugar and palm oil. They received practical training in the use of futures markets and options as well as of financial instruments designed to limit the risks linked to interest rate and exchange rate fluctuations. *(For more information on the TRAINFORTRADE programme, see "UNCTAD Bulletin", September-October, 1990, p. 10).*

INTERNATIONAL COPPER STUDY GROUP

At the end of its inaugural meeting held on 22-26 June, the International Copper Study Group adopted its rules of procedure as well as amendments to its terms of reference that will allow Japan, the world's largest importer of copper, to join the Group. The current membership consists of 18 countries and the European Community, together accounting for over 61 per cent of the world copper trade. Indonesia indicated that it was completing the necessary procedure for joining the Group and Zambia reaffirmed its intention to join. Some one-hundred government and industry representatives from 28 countries attended the inaugural meeting.

PROGRESS AT COCOA CONFERENCE

The second round of negotiations between cocoa producing and consuming countries, which ended on 24 July, registered good progress towards a new international agreement with economic provisions. The latter will replace the 1986 Agreement which is due to expire in a year's time. An important basis for progress was an agreement in principle on the issue of production policy. The proposal calls for the creation of a Standing Committee which would deal with the problem of structural overproduction of cocoa. Major outstanding issues are the intervention mechanism for dealing with short-term problems, the price levels to be defended and the duration of a new agreement. A third round of negotiations will take place, also under UNCTAD auspices, in November this year. Some 160 representatives of 45 countries, including all major producers and consumers, as well as the Cocoa Producers' Alliance, attended the meeting.

PUBLICATIONS

- Report of the Trade and Development Board on its Seventeenth Special Session, first and second parts, Official Records, Supplement No. 1 (TD/B/1319)
- Report of the Trade and Development Board on the Second Part of its thirty-eighth session (UNCTAD/PSM/CAS/410)
- Report of the Trade and Development Board. Official records of the General Assembly–Supplement No. 15 (A/46/15)
- List of Intergovernmental Organizations participating in UNCTAD activities (TD/B/INF.106/Rev.5/Add.1)
- Report of the Working Group on International Shipping Legislation on its thirteenth session (TD/B/1311-TD/B/C.4/341-TD/B/C.4/ISL/59)
- Feasibility study for an interregional trade financing facility for the exports of non-traditional goods of developing countries (TD/B/1300/Supp.2/Rev.1)
- UNCTAD Monthly Commodity Price Bulletin, Vol. XII, No. 5, May 1992 (TD/B/C.1/CPB/L.131)
- Tungsten Statistics, June 1992 (UNCTAD/DDM/Misc.46)
- International Tin Statistics, Bulletin No. 4, April 1992 (TD/TIN/STAT/4)
- Summary Report of the fourth UNCTAD-NGO Consultation Geneva, 4-6 December 1991 (UNCTAD/NGLS/37)
- Consideration of project proposals by governments and industry which could be submitted for possible financing under the second account of the Common Fund for Commodities (TD/B/CN.1/TUNGSTEN/AC.2)

UNCTAD documents are available for reference at all United Nations Information Centres and at depository libraries for United Nations publications. The yearly subscription for all mimeographed UNCTAD documents is US$250 including postage. Requests for such subscriptions as well as orders for individual sales publications should be addressed to United Nations Sales Section, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

FORTHCOMING UNCTAD MEETINGS

- ***September***
  - ***21***
    Trade and Development Board, first (pre-sessional) executive session
  - ***28-14 October***
    Trade and Development Board, thirty-ninth session, first part
- ***October***
  - ***19-23***
    Standing Committee on Commodities, first session
  - ***26-28***
    Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Iron Ore, first session
  - ***26-30***
    Standing Committee on Developing Services Sectors, first session

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